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## V.

## WHO ARE THE CULPRITS?

SOCIALISTS delight in denouncing the rich or "privileged classes," as the wealthier citizens of the Republic are sometimes most incorrectly styled—the "capitalistic class," to use their favorite phrase—as the authors and supporters of the laws that favor corporations to the prejudice of the masses of the people. American workingmen will never effect any legislative reform until they have the moral courage to see and to confess that for whatever social evils legislation entails they alone or at least they chiefly are responsible. There is not a single election precinct in the United States in which the workingmen do not constitute an overwhelming majority of the popular vote. *They* choose the lawmakers. They invest the various executive officers with the power of the State and Nation. If these men, as a class, therefore, prove unworthy of their trust, it is the workingmen who should be held accountable for it. To denounce any class of men for perverting the laws to their personal advantage is alike idle and illogical; classes always have and corporations always will seek to so construe the laws as to advance their selfish interests, and no wise legislator can innocently ignore this fact. It is probably impossible—as Napoleon discovered—to make laws so simple and clear that a member of a learned profession can never pervert their intent, but it certainly is quite within the power of laws to prevent the "exploitation" of the masses by the classes to an extent that would be seriously felt. But to secure impartial legislation, it is absolutely indispensable that legislators should be chosen not in view of party expediency, but to secure agents too intelligent to be deceived and too honest to be approached by the givers of bribes. It is a notorious fact that the most corrupt legislators are chosen from districts where the workingmen are strongest. Workingmen sow tares in the ballot-box, and expect to reap wheat in the legislative hall. Of course they are always disappointed and always will be disappointed until they learn that men never gather grapes from thistles—that in the political as well as in the rural fields men reap as they sow.

Honest voting for honest candidates—this is the alpha and omega of reform. Until the workingmen realize this truth they will be cheated just as often as they vote. "Third parties" or "a single tax" will bring them no nearer to equal rights nor hasten the advent by a single hour of the millennium that they seek to inaugurate. Union of labor also is not sufficient until it results in the election of integrity and capacity. If the present representatives of workingmen in the State and National legislatures are neither honest nor efficient, let the workingmen remember that they themselves are the culprits.

HENRY MELROSE.

## VI.

## PERSONALITY OF TEACHERS.

ETERNAL vigilance is the price of liberty. This is an old saying, but every now and then it receives a new force, as the agencies of our liberties become afflicted with dry-rot, or are attacked by ill-wishers to our material prosperity. The public school, rather than the press, has become the palladium of our liberties. But the educational system of the United States is threatened now by a fungous growth which, sooner or later, attaches itself to every human agency of progress. Red tape has wound itself so closely about the public school system, that teachers and pupils alike suffer from the ill effects of constriction. Under its baneful influence teachers have become automatons, capable of imparting only cut-and-dried infor-

mation. It is a rare thing now to find in the public schools a living teacher. The old race of pedagogues, who came directly into contact with the minds of children, and fashioned not only the mental powers, but also the characters of their pupils, is dying out. In the city of New York, for example, the supply of teachers by the regulations of the public school commissioners is practically limited to the young and inexperienced girls who swarm out of the Normal College. These "girl graduates" have been brought up in the New York public schools, and are acquainted with no methods save those which have prevailed in these schools during their attendance. "They go into the schools with the idea that they have a right to the empty places, and their crude and machine-like work, modeled solely on what they have seen, serves only to intensify the constantly accumulating evil tendencies of our schools." And if an experienced and wise teacher comes from some town outside the city, his every movement is cramped and fettered by some one of the petty regulations of the Board of Education.

Under the regulations of our School Commissioners, the reputation of the teacher depends entirely upon the number of good marks which the scholars attain upon examination. The physical well-being of the class, the moral character and strength of intellect which the teacher has inculcated, count for nothing. The teacher who has succeeded in embedding on the tongue-tips of his pupils a certain set of cut-and-dried facts and figures, is the teacher who is considered most successful. There is no free play in teaching. There is no opportunity given to a teacher to study the capabilities or characters of pupils. A certain number of facts, dates and cut-and-dried information must be crammed into the heads of the pupils, or the teacher loses his place.

This is all wrong. There must be less centralization and more individuality in the pedagogic system. The present system of examinations must be entirely done away with. There must be a change, and a radical change. There must be an increase in the personality of the teacher, and a decrease in the red-tapeism of the Board of Education.

BRISCOE E. MAN.

## VII.

### FLEXIBLE MAJORITIES ONCE MORE.

IN Col. Norton's comments, in the May REVIEW, on my article in the April REVIEW, some points are well taken, but others seem more like the genial assurances of an optimist than the cold conclusions of a statistician. The theory that in great crises the people recognize the importance of the issues at stake, and vote overwhelmingly for the right, is not borne out by the figures. The most momentous question that we have ever decided by a popular election came up in 1864, when the re-nomination of President Lincoln put to the test the determination to continue the war to a successful issue. Yet Mr. Lincoln was re-elected by a majority of only ten per cent. in the popular vote; a change of one ballot in twenty would have given his opponent a majority, and would probably have established the Confederacy. On his first election Mr. Lincoln had only a plurality. If patriotic Democrats had been as willing to vote for liberty and the preservation of the Union in 1860 as they were to fight for it in 1861, the Secessionists would perhaps not have felt encouraged to carry their great conspiracy into execution. In speaking of "make-weight parties," I did not refer to the Mugwumps, for they are not a party; but in this connection it may be as well to examine the oft-repeated assertion that the Free-soilers of 1844-48 and the Republicans of 1854-56 were the Mugwumps of their day. If the Free-soilers in 1844 had declared that James K. Polk was better than his party, was in fact an